

# Provision of counselling for people affected by cancer across MFT – a collaborative approach

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## Background + aims

In 2021, 3666 cancers were diagnosed at Wythenshawe, Trafford, Withington and Altrincham Hospitals. Analysis of Macmillan EHNA (Electronic Holistic Needs Assessments) data from Wythenshawe respondents in 2020-21 showed 74% rated worry, fear and anxiety as their second highest concerns and psychological distress is widely recognised as being one of the main concerns reported by cancer patients.

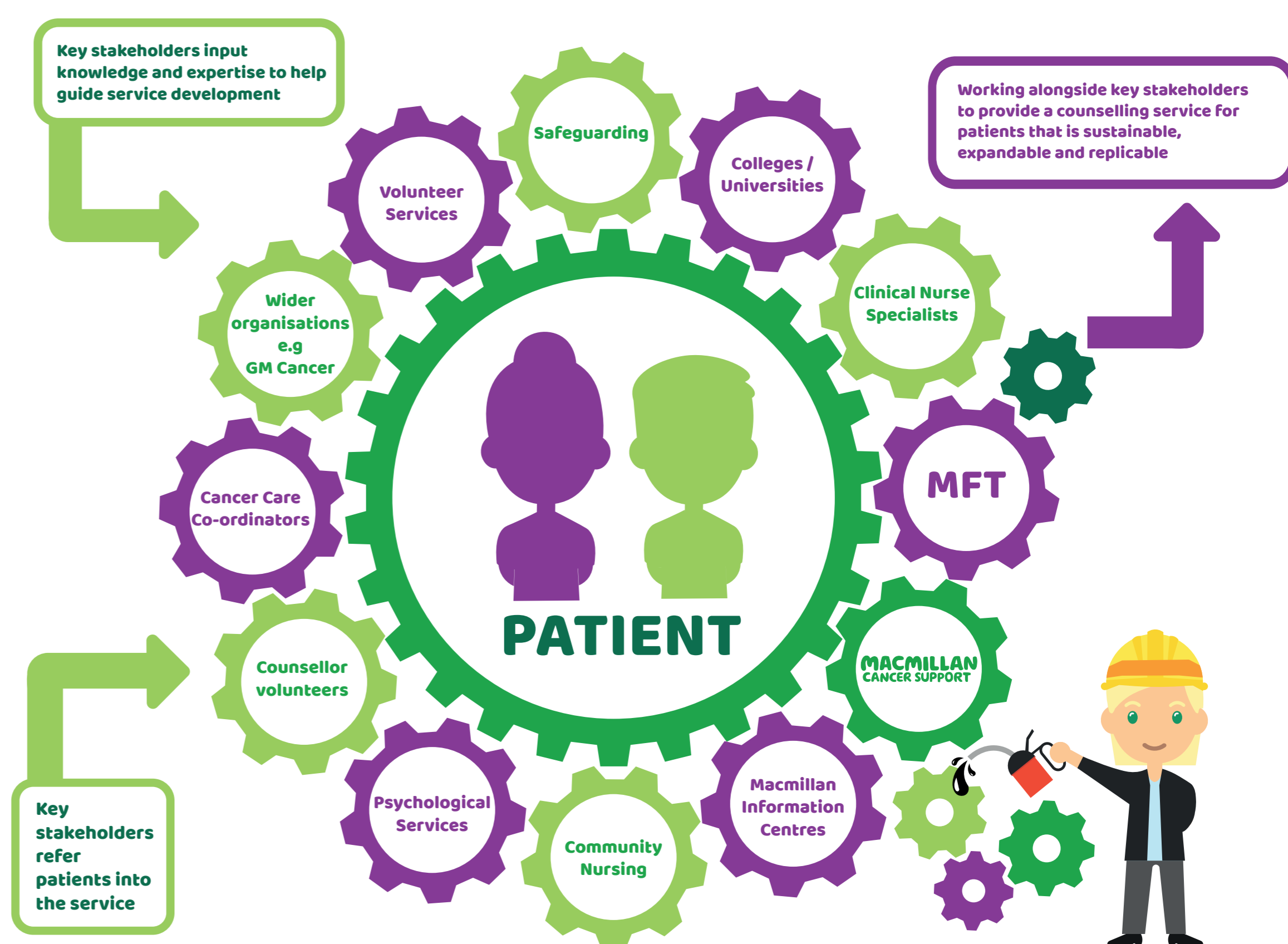
Since 2018, the Macmillan Counsellor & Psychological Support Coordinator has been developing a Level 3 (L3) psychological support service for People affected By Cancer (PaBC) at the Macmillan Centre at Wythenshawe Hospital. It was recognised that there was a substantial gap in provision between the Level 2 support Clinical Nurse Specialists and the Level 4 provision by psychologists which was not always appropriate, and demand was too high.

Tasked to provide a service that was cost neutral, a framework was created that uses volunteer and student counsellors to deliver L3 person-centred counselling support accessible for all PaBC, including patients, their families and carers.

## Method

To ensure the safety of both patients and volunteers and to ensure the sustainability of this approach the service:

- Engaged key stakeholders
- Ensured governance requirements were identified and fulfilled
- Assessed and triaged patients and individually allocated counsellors to ensure appropriate safeguarding
- Ensured recruitment processes are optimised via local universities and college
- Provided supervision of caseloads and counsellor development
- Collected and collated patient related data and experiences



## Results

Year	Number of counsellors (*)	Number of referrals	Number of sessions attended	Cost saving (£40 x session attended)
2018 (01/01 - 31/12)	3	82	125	£5,000
2019 (01/01 - 31/12)	5	149	478	£19,120
2020 (01/01 - 31/12)	6	109	410	£16,400
2021 (01/01 - 31/12)	8	154	580	£23,200
2022 (01/01 - to date)	9	140	498	£19,920
<b>Totals</b>	9	634	2091	£83,640

\*(This figure includes the Macmillan Counsellor & Psychological Support Co-ordinator on 1.0 wte)



I have experienced real growth. I am more self-aware and have a better understanding of who I am. This has been beneficial for supporting my holistic approach to my treatment.

Helpful, caring, compassionate, kind, focused, friendly, flexible in how you work together, a 'rock' during incredibly difficult times. I can't think of anything that could be improved - in fact to provide such a fantastic service during a pandemic exceeded expectations. My counsellor extended my sessions due to Covid19 and I am extremely grateful for this, as it helped me to manage coping with cancer during such difficult and strange times.



## Conclusion

The service reputation, proven governance and sustainable volunteer model convinced the wider Trust and Macmillan to invest, replicating the service across Greater Manchester, with a comparable post recently recruited at the Oxford Road Campus and a further post planned for North Manchester General Hospital. This will allow greater equity in provision of counselling and strengthen the model, increasing Level 3 expertise available across MFT.